THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

connections

Equality of Opportunity and Freedom from Discrimination

The Commission was honoured to visit Turtle Lodge in Sagkeeng First Nation on November 18th. We joined a number of government and community organizations to learn from Elders and Knowledge Holders on our collective responsibilities toward caring for the land. Learning from our Elders and Knowledge Holders in an important step on the path toward reconciliation.

2016 Manitoba Human Rights Awards recognizes those advancing equality

The 2016 recipients of Manitoba's annual human rights awards have been announced.

The 2016 Human Rights Commitment Award of Manitoba will go to Tracia's Trust Strategy Team.

Tracia's Trust, named in honour of Tracia Owen, who died tragically at the age of 14, is Manitoba's strategy responding to children and youth at risk of/or survivors of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

The 2016 Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award recipient is Lauren Milne. Lauren's studies and volunteer activities demonstrate her long term support for human rights in her community.

For more information on the award recipients or if you would like to attend the reception, please visit our website and or click on "You are Invited." The event is on December 8 at the RBC Convention Centre from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Light refreshments will be served.

The Rights Connection

By Isha Khan - Executive Director

Not the time to be complacent

Reported incidents of anti-semitism and islamaphobia have been all over the media since the recent U.S. presidential election. The messaging about the incidents varies depending on how, where and by whom the story is reported. Regardless, our mandate has never been more clear.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is mandated to achieving equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination. This is more than a statement. It is a goal we continually work towards. We strive for this by promoting human rights principles, educating about The Human Rights Code and by administering a complaints process. We believe there is no place for discrimination and encourage those who believe they have been discriminated against to contact us.

We must not be complacent in believing that discrimination only happens south of the border. We still have much work to do. We must continue to identify discrimination when we see it and to speak out against it. The more we speak about discrimination and its impacts, the closer we get to achieving equality.

Everyone in Manitoba has a role. Use your own voice to speak up so we can ensure that everyone in our province has equal opportunity.

A policy may not be enough

When a customer claims discrimination against an employee in a store, it is not only bad publicity; it is the store or company that must respond to the concern. A recent example in the media dealt with Dolorama and a Sikh man. According to the man, the company refused him entry because he was carrying a kirplan. He came to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission to voice his concern and expected an apology.

He got one. According to the head office of the company, kirpans are "absolutely allowed" in its stores and immediately provided an apology.

The store advised the Commission that the incident was a mistake. To some extent it may have been, but the important lesson for the store is that having a policy is only the first step. The second step is to ensure the policy is implemented and understood.

What should service providers take away from this story?

This incident should be noted by all service providers. A policy that is not implemented and therefore not known by the staff is useless. Ensure that your employees, especially new ones read and understand your service policies and everyone receives updates when changes are made. It is the store or company that is responsible for the discrimination, not the employee.

The Human Rights Code says that discrimination by landlords, employers and service providers such as restaurants, stores and public facilities that's based on religion is prohibited.

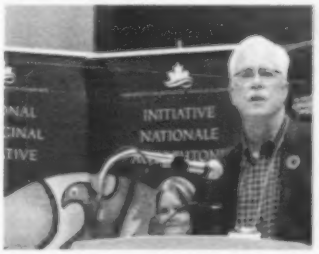
Commissioner elected President of WICC

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC), the oldest women's organization in Canada will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary in October 2018. At its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 2016, Manitoba Human Rights Commissioner Diane Dwarka was selected as President Elect. Her term of office will be two years as President Elect, two as President and one as Past President. Diane is a past president of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Winnipeg.

The WICC respects diversity; fosters connections between church and society; creates opportunities for communication, education, advocacy and theological study.

Human Rights mid-term meeting held in Winnipeg

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission hosted delegates from 10 of the 12 commissions across Canada in Winnipeg earlier this month. As members of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA), the delegates gathered to share experience and ideas. Ontario's work on raising awareness of systemic discrimination in the correctional system was highlighted by the coverage of Adam Capay's confinement in a Thunder Bay facility. Nova Scotia's work around racial profiling in the retail industry was also the subject of much discussion. Meetings like this enable the commission to join their voices on issues of national importance and to develop common approaches to issues.



President of CASHRA David Arnot speaks about commissions working together to further human rights across Canada at a Winnipeg reception.